

Epi Update for Friday, September 13, 2019
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's Epi Update include:

- **Late summer and early fall is AFM season**
- **Severe respiratory illness among persons with a history of vaping**
- **Epi Quiz**
- **In the news: Can the world eradicate another disease?**
- **In the news: Too little sleep, or too much, may raise heart attack risk**
- **Infographic: Germs are everywhere**

Late summer and early fall is AFM season

Acute flaccid myelitis (AFM) is a rare but serious condition. It affects the nervous system, specifically the area of the spinal cord called gray matter, which causes the muscles and reflexes in the body to become weak. The majority of AFM patients are previously healthy children who had respiratory symptoms or fever consistent with a viral infection less than a week before they experienced limb weakness. CDC believes viruses, including enteroviruses, play a role in AFM. Since AFM can progress quickly from limb weakness to respiratory failure requiring urgent medical intervention, rapidly identifying symptoms and hospitalizing patients is important.

AFM cases tend to spike in between August and October of every other year. CDC began tracking AFM in 2014, when the first national outbreak of 120 cases occurred. Another outbreak occurred in 2016 with 149 cases, and again with 233 patients in 41 states in 2018. AFM became reportable in Iowa in 2016. Since then Iowa has had three confirmed cases. CADE encourages medical professionals to familiarize themselves with AFM and quickly recognize AFM symptoms and report all suspected cases to IDPH by calling 1-800-362-2736. Early recognition and reporting are critical for providing patients with appropriate care and rehabilitation.

For more information on AFM, visit IDPH's site at idph.iowa.gov/CADE/disease-information/AFM and CDC's site at www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/index.html.

Severe respiratory illness among persons with a history of vaping

The Iowa Department of Public Health continues to receive reports of severe respiratory illness among persons with a history of vaping. There have been 13 cases reported, 12 of which also include a report of vaping THC products. Youth should be discouraged from using vaping and e-cigarette products of any kind, as the long-term health impacts for youth using these products are unknown. Patients with a history of vaping who are experiencing breathing problems should seek medical care. Health care providers should ask patients with respiratory illness about the use of vaping and e-cigarette products. Health care providers are asked to report severe respiratory illness in patients with a history of vaping or e-cigarette use to the Iowa Department of Public Health (1-800-362-2736).

For more information, visit idph.iowa.gov/ehi/lung-disease-vaping.

Epi Quiz

Answer available at the bottom of the Epi Update.

A “classic” outbreak: The 1969 Holy Cross University football team’s season was cancelled after only two games when 90 of the team’s 97 players and coaches became ill, all within a 15-day period, with this disease. On the second day of practice, 4 weeks before the outbreak began, a very hot August 29, players drank water from a field irrigation faucet. Four ill neighborhood kids who lived in a condemned building next to the field liked to play in the puddles that formed around the irrigation system’s faucets. Earlier that day, firefighters battled a blaze nearby causing a drop in the water pressure, allowing water to seep into the practice field’s irrigation system. Several weeks later Holy Cross lost their first game to Harvard 13-0 when a few of the players were feeling weak and sluggish. Running wind sprints in practice made one player throw his helmet down in disgust over his performance. By the second game, with Dartmouth, in which they lost 38-6, eight players were out sick, and the initial diagnosis was made for one player. During the game, the quarterback remembers looking over at a potential receiver who then fainted. What was the disease/infection?

Quiz questions compliments of Richard Danila, Minnesota Department of Health.

In the news: Can the world eradicate another disease?

www.cnn.com/2019/09/08/health/malaria-eradication-2050-report-intl/index.html

In the news: Too little sleep, or too much, may raise heart attack risk

www.nytimes.com/2019/09/09/well/mind/too-little-sleep-or-too-much-may-raise-heart-attack-risk.html

Infographic: Germs are everywhere



To view in full size, visit

www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/images/socialmedia/washing_hands_1280x720.png.

Have a healthy and happy week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health
800-362-2736

Epi Quiz answer:

Hepatitis A